

Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota

Office of the Governor

Whereas, There are over 31 million Americans who have eyesight loss that keeps them from reading ordinary print; and,

Whereas, The incidence of low vision that leads to blindness now increases yearly, making the need for medical eye research and low vision help acutely needed; and,

Whereas, Retinitis Pigmentosa International was founded by Helen Harris and her family for the purpose of bringing awareness and medical research funds to degenerative blindness and better testing and quality of life programs for children and adults; and,

Whereas, The Harris family has proven in 30 years that one person and one family can make a difference in changing the attitudes of others under apparently impossible odds, that change can happen; and,

Whereas, The organization has brought information and education about medical research and the needs of the blind community to the White House and to the United States Congress for the purpose of curing blindness and providing better quality education and employment opportunities to those suffering from impending blindness; and,

Whereas, Under the direction of R.P. International, the first medical book was written for scholars on eye diseases such as retinitis pigmentosa, including night blindness, legal blindness, and information not recognized before; and that programs, including public service, the first telethon, newspaper articles, publicity, and talk show presentations were developed to draw attention to the overlooked needs of the blind; and,

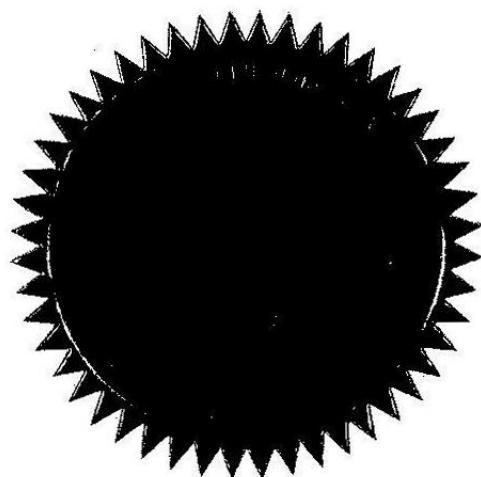
Whereas, Today, the medical research future for degenerative blindness has improved tremendously through these efforts, so that hope for reversing blindness is now a reality for some of our citizens, and new technology for audio description for motion pictures and television has been brought to the forefront; and,

Whereas, This is the 30th anniversary of R.P. International and its work toward a cure for blindness:

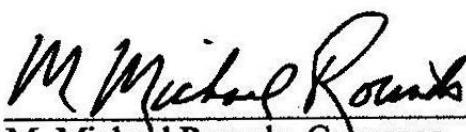
Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim June 28, 2003, as

STOP BLINDNESS DAY

in South Dakota.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twenty-third Day of May in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.



M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:



Chris Nelson, Secretary of State